



Module Specification

Sociology of Human, Non-Human and Environmental Rights

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Sociology of Human, Non-Human and Environmental Rights

Module code: UZSYNE-30-3

Level: Level 6

For implementation from: 2024-25

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Health, Science & Society

School: CHSS School of Social Sciences

Partner institutions: None

Field:

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: Drawing on a range of social sciences and humanities with a strong emphasis on the sociological discipline, this module will help students develop a nuanced understanding of (human) rights, their institutionalisation and their violation. Traditionally, rights have been understood in philosophical and legalistic terms. However, in recent years sociology has attempted to subject the realm of human rights talk and its corresponding institutions and impact on economy, society and politics to sociological critique, moving beyond a positivist understanding that

focuses on law and the philosophical approach that debates its normative foundations, to an approach which seeks to understand how rights as a discourse and a practice shape society at large.

By utilising a growing body of (human) rights scholarship and research, this module will introduce students to the historical origins and evolution of rights, key debates within the human (and other) rights literature, as well as provide a sociological and theoretical foundation to critically engage with rights theory and practice. Students will emerge with a more sophisticated and complex understanding of what rights are, their potential and their limitations, as well as the ever-expanding range of contexts in which they are applied, enforced, and violated.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The module nurtures autonomous working and develops research skills such as analysis and critical synthesis of relevant empirical and theoretical sources.

The assignments will ensure students will be able to achieve learning outcomes, namely critically assessing different theoretical approaches developed within contemporary sociological and interdisciplinary critiques of rights theory and practice and utilising scholarly peer-reviewed sources to demonstrate an ability to apply and critically analyse contemporary sociological explanations on a case study of a rights violation.

The assignments will also ensure students will be able to communicate information, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences on a chosen case of human rights violation and/or enforcement.

The written assignments will require students to keep abreast of not only the relevant academic literature and theory but policy developments, changes to law and current affairs. Therefore, the module will ensure students develop a number of graduate skills including, inter alia: research and data analysis; application of theory; analysis and synthesis of different materials; evaluation of data; appraising policy and legal documents; constructing an argument; presenting an argument in writing to a varied

audience. The assessments have also been chosen to ensure breadth and variety of assessments when we consider the place of the module in the programme as a whole.

Outline syllabus: The module will cover themes such as: where do human rights come from, and do they have a universal moral foundation?; What does the sociological tradition have to contribute to our understanding of human rights?; The differences between individual and group rights; Can nature and non-human life possess rights?; Cyber rights; and Humanitarian intervention and the colonialism of rights.

The module will give special focus to arguably the gravest of all rights violations, genocide and ecocide, as well as exploring the nexus between the two.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: A range of taught sessions including interactive student-centred seminars based around weekly readings and case study research, student group activities, discussion, which will enable students to develop skills such as analysis and critical synthesis and public speaking, as well as opportunities to discuss their assignments. This will ensure that students are provided formative assessments across the whole academic year.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Critically assess different theoretical approaches developed within contemporary sociological and interdisciplinary critiques of rights theory and practise

MO2 Communicate information, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audience on a chosen case of human rights violation and/or enforcement.

MO3 Demonstrate an ability to apply and critically analyse contemporary sociological explanations on a case study of a rights violation.

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Total = 300

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/6C29B7E6-D183-35E1-4C76-DA8B3185F7F2.html?lang=en&login=1) via the following link <https://rl.talis.com/3/uwe/lists/6C29B7E6-D183-35E1-4C76-DA8B3185F7F2.html?lang=en&login=1>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: This module has 2 assessment tasks:

Case Study: 2500 words

The 2500-word case study requires students both to engage with theoretical knowledge of the sociology of rights and to provide a contemporary example to illustrate their argument.

Written Assignment: 'Media briefing' of 1500 words

The second task consists of summarising written material in real world scenarios students are likely to encounter in their careers. ('Real world scenarios' means preparation for an imaginary media appearance or presentation designed to simulate real world practice.)

The written assignments are also 'authentic assessments', such that they do not lend themselves to 'essay factories' and other forms of plagiarism. Space in the teaching schedule will be given to how to avoid plagiarism.

As well as ongoing formative assessment throughout the module in the form of

ongoing feedback on contributions and skills development during workshops, case study and enquiry-based learning tasks will be set throughout the delivery of the module in order to provide opportunities for group learning and for formative feedback. Students will have the opportunity to discuss their summative assignments in class, during one-to-one tutorials and during the dedicated assignment workshops.

The module's learning outcomes and assessment strategy support the sociology programme's fulfilment of the relevant QAA benchmarks.

Assessment tasks:**Case Study (First Sit)**

Description: 3500-word case study

Weighting: 75 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO3

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: 'Media briefing' of 1000 words.

Weighting: 25 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO2

Case Study (Resit)

Description: 3500-word case study

Weighting: 75 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO3

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: 'Media briefing' of 1000 words.

Weighting: 25 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO2

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Sociology [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2022-23

Criminology and Sociology [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2022-23

Sociology with Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23